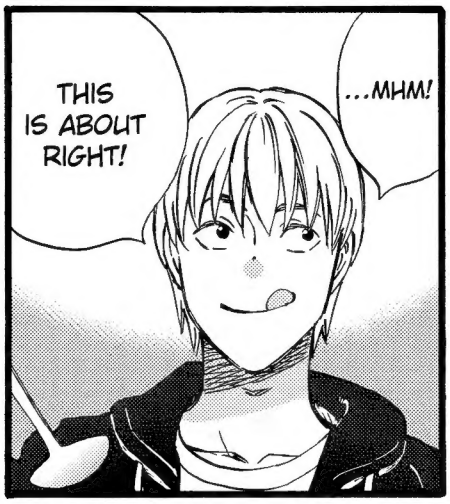
Dooong
ゴ
Dooong
ゴ

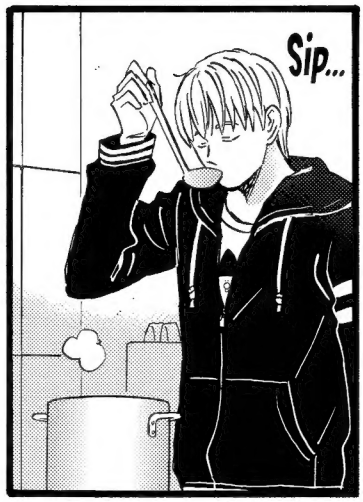
Dooong
ゴ

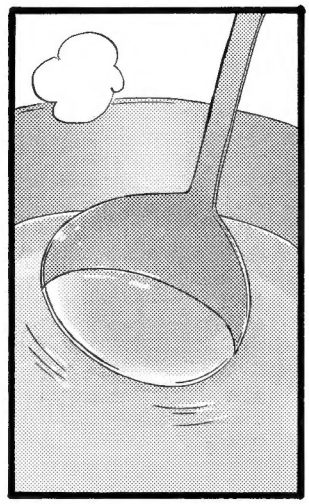
Dooong
ゴ

Fsshhh...

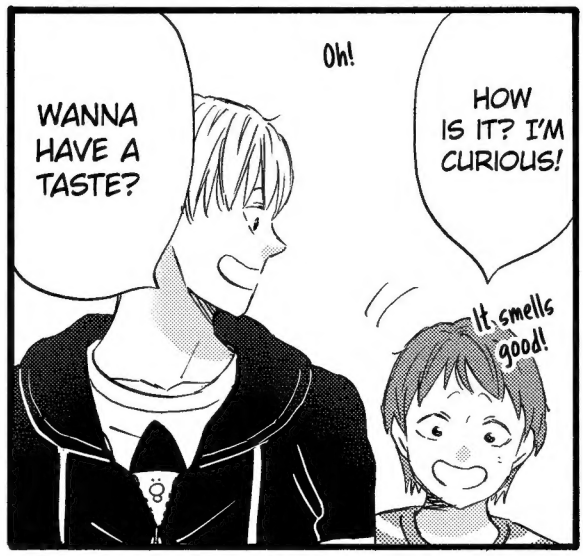
Dooong
ゴ

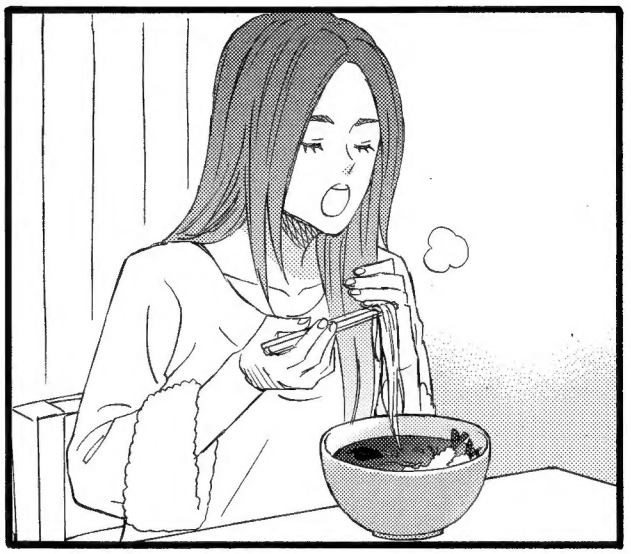

THIS IS ABOUT RIGHT!
...MHM!


Sip...

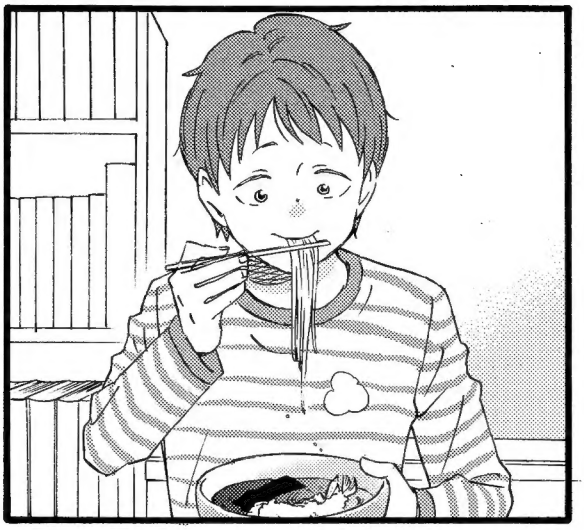


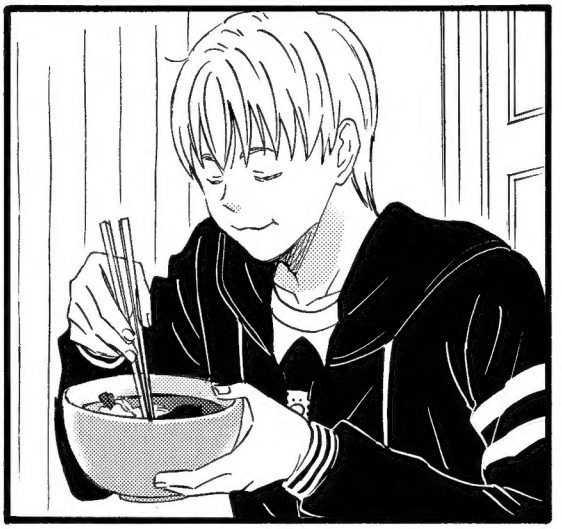
YAAAY!
THIS DASHI TASTES DELICIOUS!
... OHH ...!


WANNA HAVE A TASTE?
Oh!
HOW IS IT? I'M CURIOUS!
It smells good!

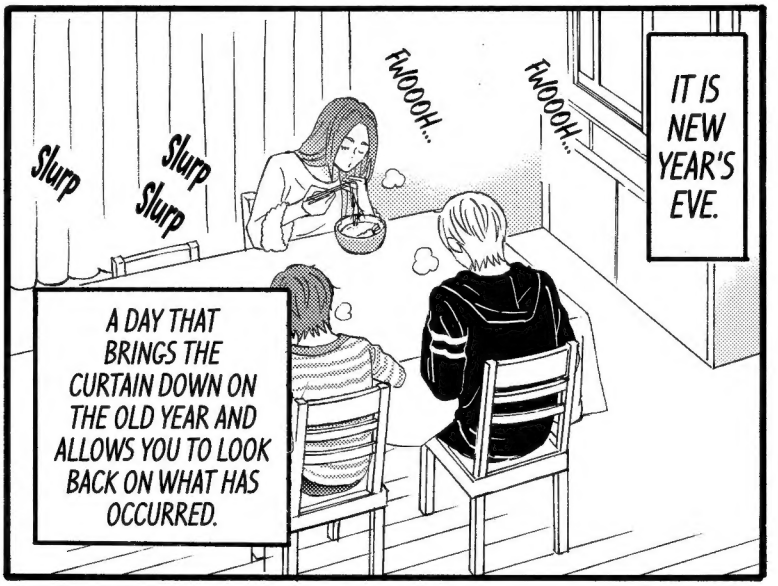


HERE WE GO! THE NEW YEAR'S SOBA IS READY!
ALL RIGHT!

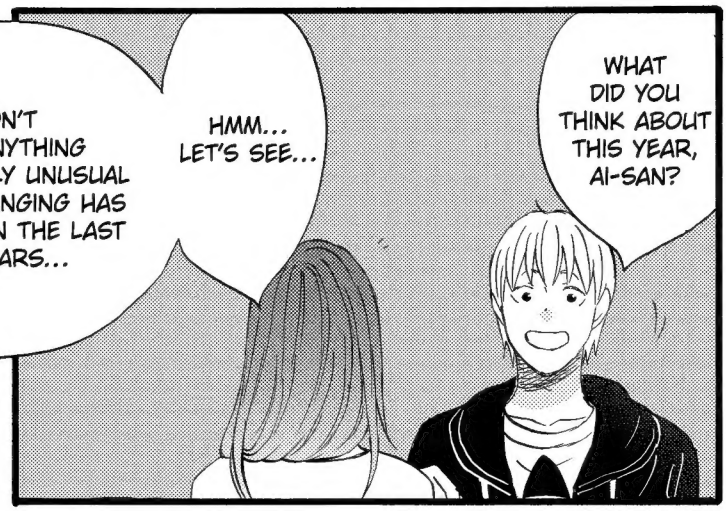




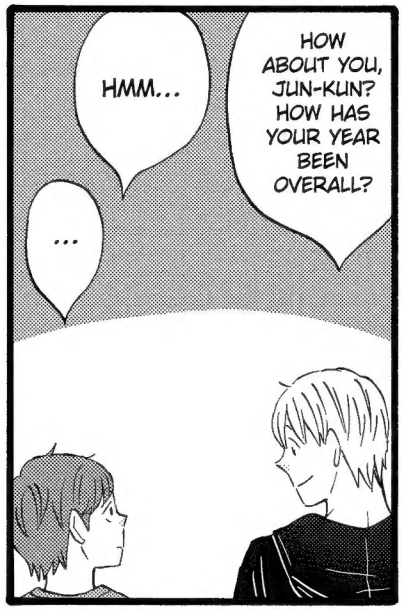
THIS YEAR HAS FLOWN BY, HASN'T IT...?
FOR THE KIRISHIMA FAMILY, IT'S A TIME FOR REFLECTION.

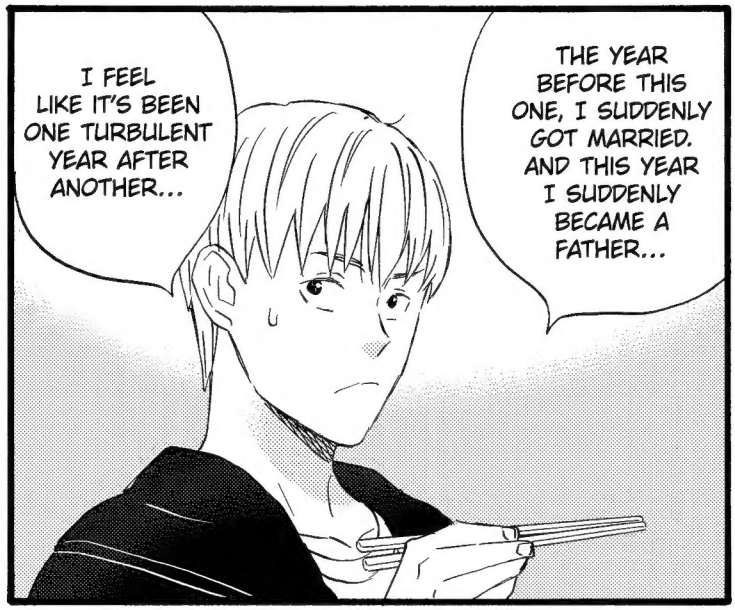

IT IS NEW YEAR'S EVE.
FWOOOH...
FWOOOH...
Slurp
Slurp
Slurp
A DAY THAT BRINGS THE CURTAIN DOWN ON THE OLD YEAR AND ALLOWS YOU TO LOOK BACK ON WHAT HAS OCCURRED.

Fwooh...
Fwooh...
I DON'T THINK ANYTHING PARTICULARLY UNUSUAL OR LIFE-CHANGING HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS...

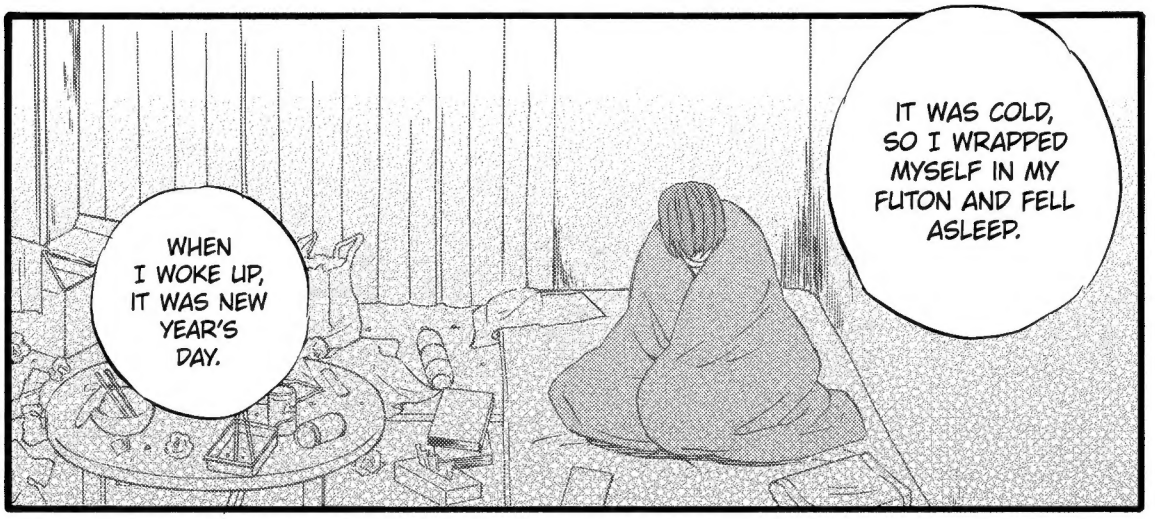

HMM... LET'S SEE...
WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THIS YEAR, AI-SAN?

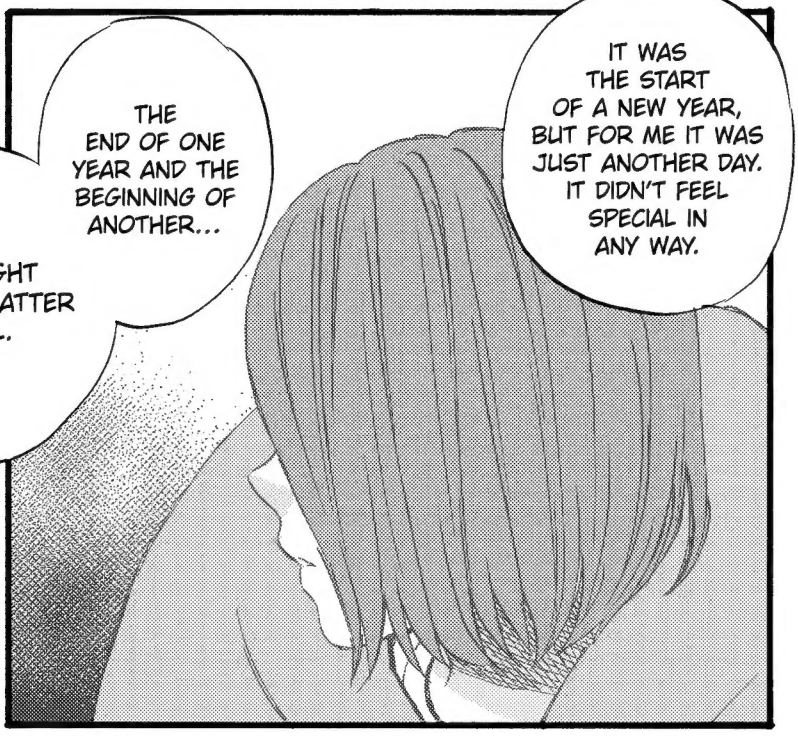
IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS, YOU RANDOMLY MARRIED A GUY YOU PICKED UP IN A BAR AND ADOPTED A CHILD... NOT MUCH HAPPENED, INDEED.
WHAAAT ...?
Bwa ha!
SO THIS ONE WAS THE SAME AS ALWAYS!
Sluuurp...
Slurp
Slurp


HMM...
HOW ABOUT YOU, JUN-KUN? HOW HAS YOUR YEAR BEEN OVERALL?
...


I FEEL LIKE IT'S BEEN ONE TURBULENT YEAR AFTER ANOTHER...
THE YEAR BEFORE THIS ONE, I SUDDENLY GOT MARRIED. AND THIS YEAR I SUDDENLY BECAME A FATHER...

LAST NEW YEAR'S EVE, I WAS ALONE IN MY OLD HOUSE.

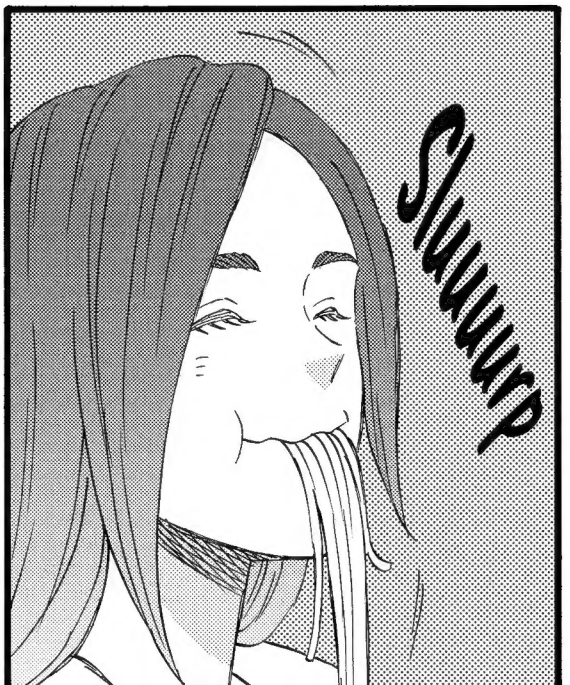

WHEN I WOKE UP, IT WAS NEW YEAR'S DAY.
IT WAS COLD, SO I WRAPPED MYSELF IN MY FUTON AND FELL ASLEEP.

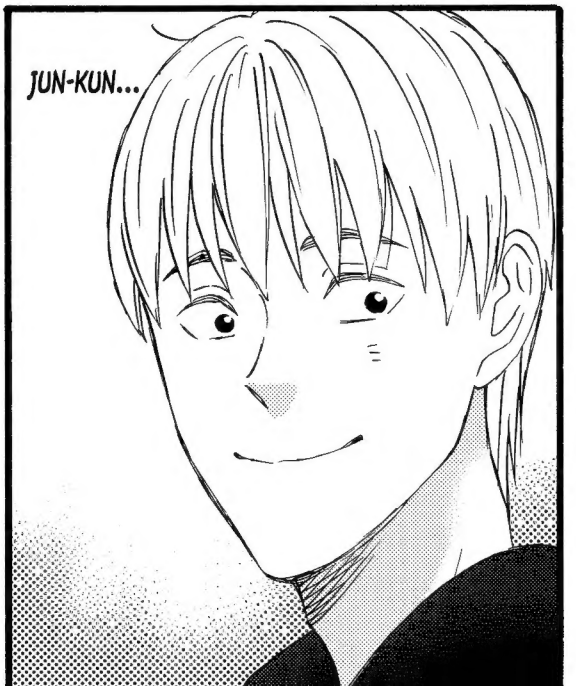

I THOUGHT IT DIDN'T MATTER AT ALL.
THE END OF ONE YEAR AND THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER...
IT WAS THE START OF A NEW YEAR, BUT FOR ME IT WAS JUST ANOTHER DAY. IT DIDN'T FEEL SPECIAL IN ANY WAY.

JUN-KUN...
IT'S AN ODD FEELING, BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER WHY I'M HERE SOMETIMES.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT I'M NOW ABLE TO SPEND TIME LIKE THIS, AS A FAMILY...

MORE THAN THAT, THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO LOOKED AFTER ME AND SHOWERED ME WITH KINDNESS.
LOOKING BACK, IT WAS A VERY WARM AND PLEASANT YEAR.

SOME SAD THINGS HAPPENED THIS YEAR, BUT...


SLUUUURP


JUN-KUN...

YOU CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL THAT SOMETHING'S MISSING.

STILL, WHEN YOU SPEND YOUR NEW YEAR'S EVE RELAXING IN FRONT OF THE TV LIKE THIS...

LIKE WHAT?

Thanks for the food! It was delicious!

Sure. I'm glad that everyone in the family is happy.

THE NEAREST TRAIN STATION HAS THREE OVERLAPPING LINES THAT ALSO SERVE THE SUBWAY, AND A BUS STOP IS CLOSE BY.

IT HAS ALL THE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS YOU NEED, BUT...

THIS HOUSE IS LARGE AND LOVELY, THERE'S THE PUBLIC PARK AND PLENTY OF NATURE NEARBY, AND THE RIVERBED IS ONLY A SHORT WALK AWAY.

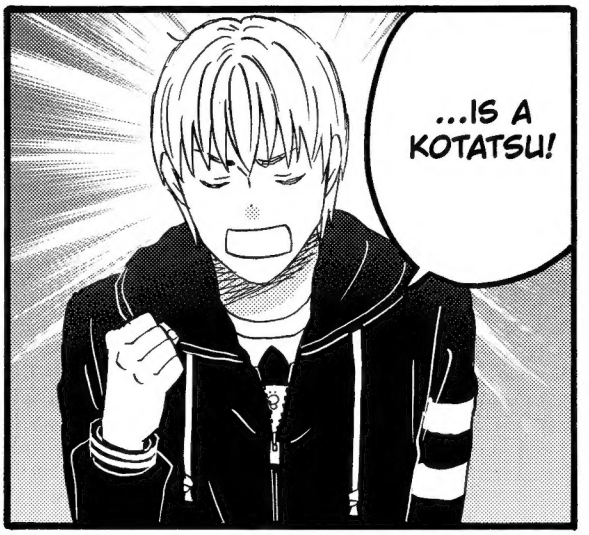
IT'S CONVENIENTLY LOCATED, WITH A LARGE SUPERMARKET AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER.

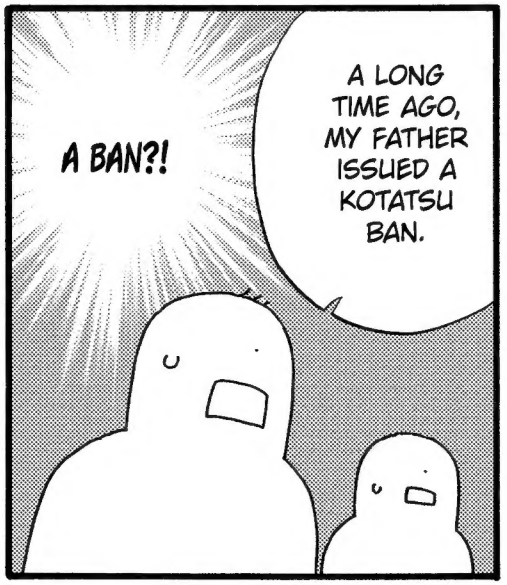
THE ONLY THING MISSING IN THIS HOUSE...

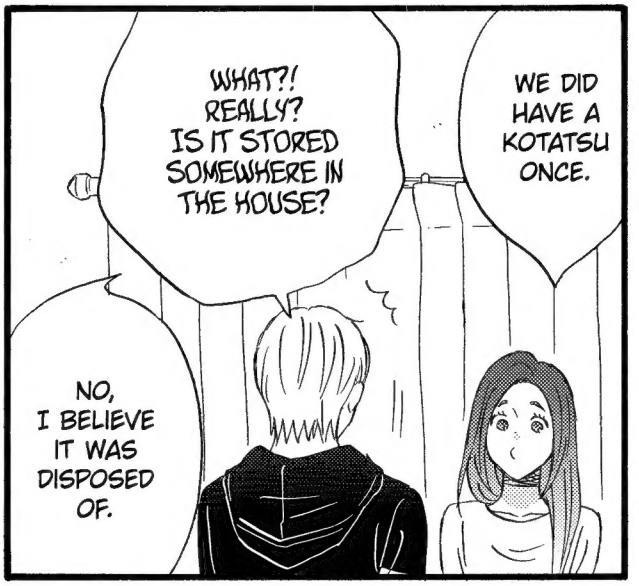
OH? AND WHAT'S THAT?

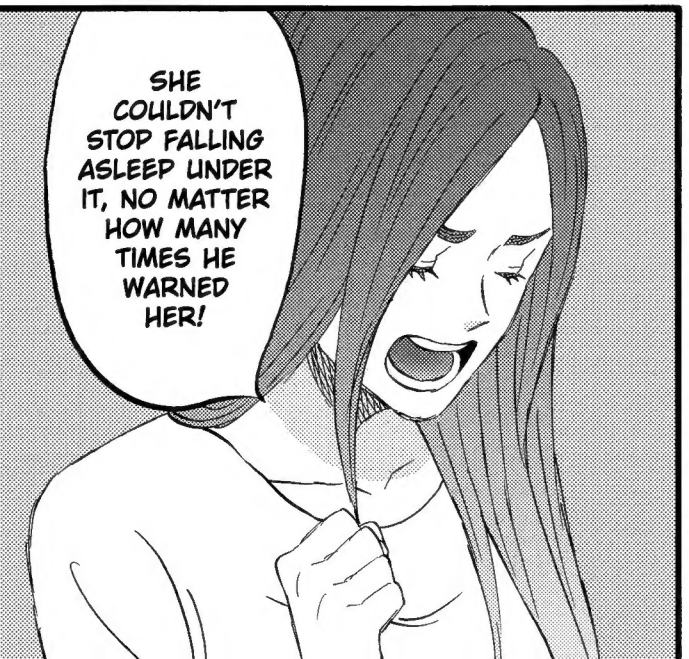
THERE'S ONE THING THAT WE DON'T HAVE...

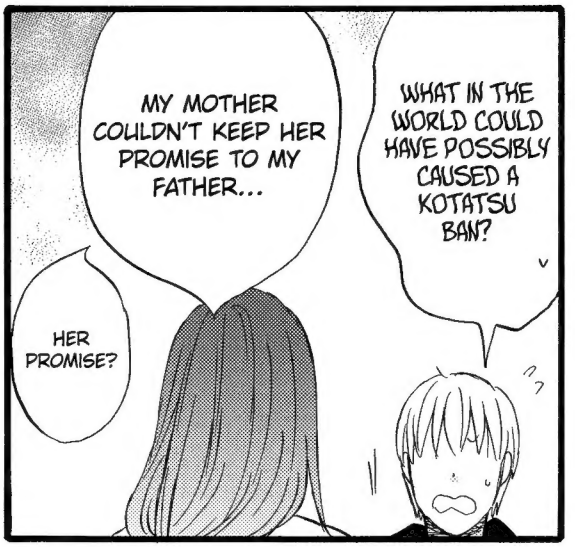
IN THE DEAD OF WINTER, I LOVE EATING ORANGES UNDER THE KOTATSU! IT'S A TREMENDOUS SHAME WE'RE MISSING OUT ON SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
OH, YEAH... WE DON'T HAVE ONE.


...IS A KOTATSU!


A BAN?!
A LONG TIME AGO, MY FATHER ISSUED A KOTATSU BAN.

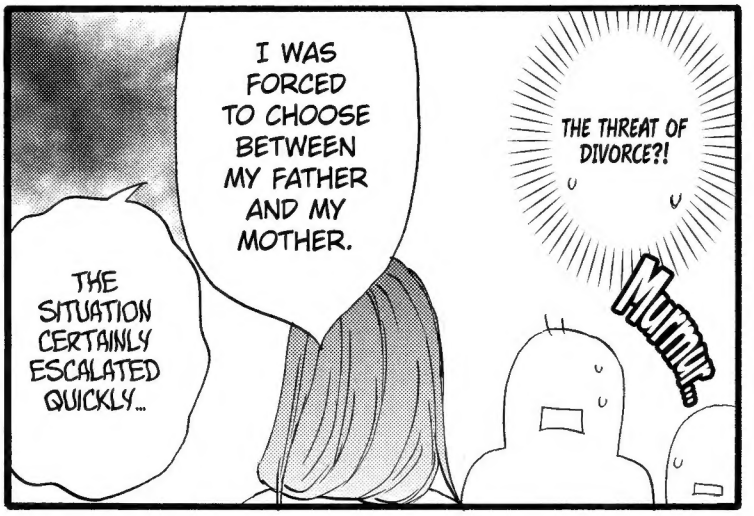

WHAT?! REALLY? IS IT STORED SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE?
WE DID HAVE A KOTATSU ONCE.
NO, I BELIEVE IT WAS DISPOSED OF.

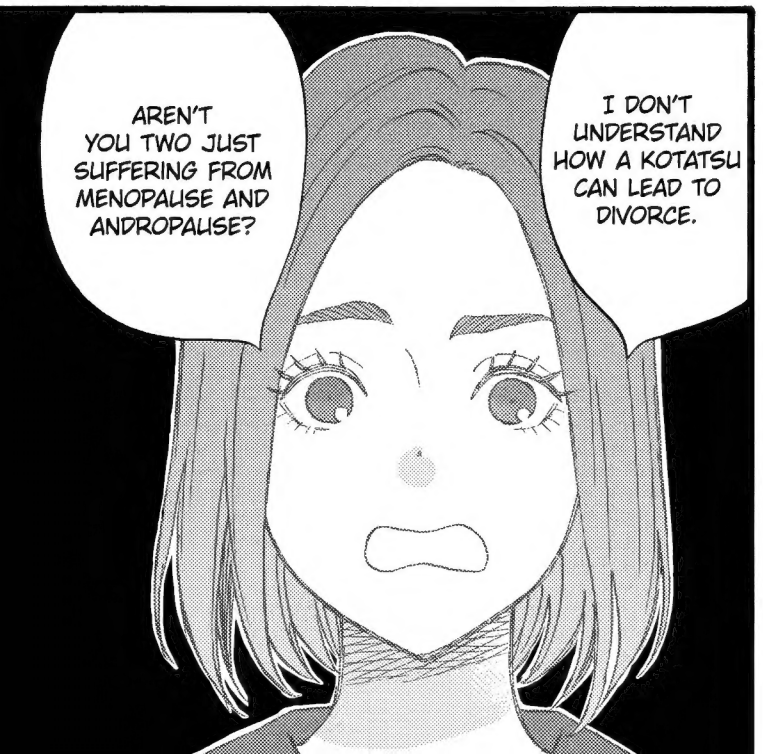

SHE COULDN'T STOP FALLING ASLEEP UNDER IT, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE WARNED HER!

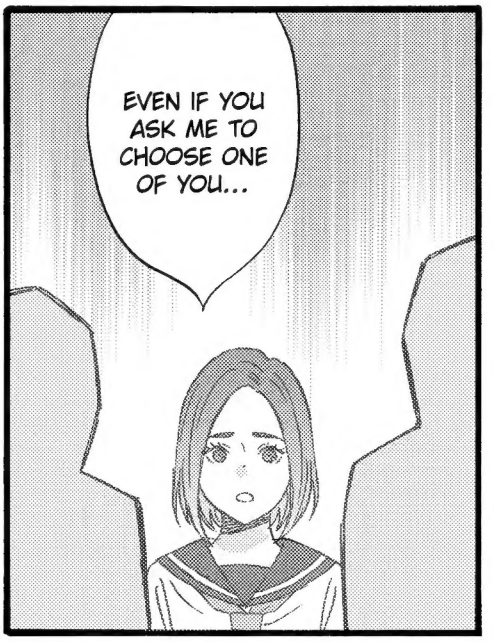

MY MOTHER COULDN'T KEEP HER PROMISE TO MY FATHER...
WHAT IN THE WORLD COULD HAVE POSSIBLY CAUSED A KOTATSU BAN?
HER PROMISE?

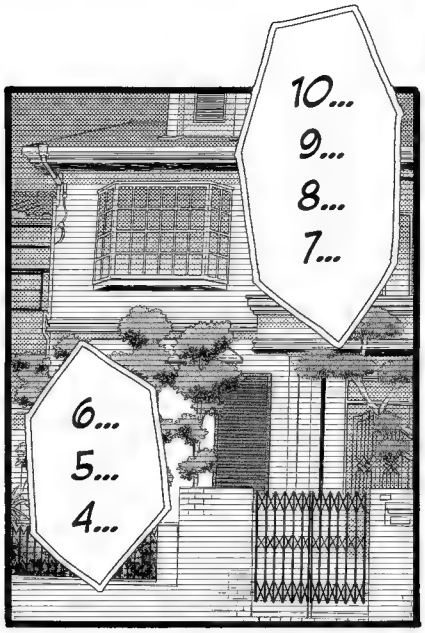
IT WAS SO SERIOUS THAT THE THREAT OF DIVORCE LOOMED AT ONE POINT DUE TO THEIR ARGUMENTS OVER WHETHER OR NOT TO DISPOSE OF THE KOTATSU.
THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER.
It just feels so comfortable!
WHAAAT...? THAT'S QUITE A NORMAL OCCURRENCE, ISN'T IT?
Bwa ha ha!

AND HOW DID YOU GET OUT OF THAT MESS?
WELL...

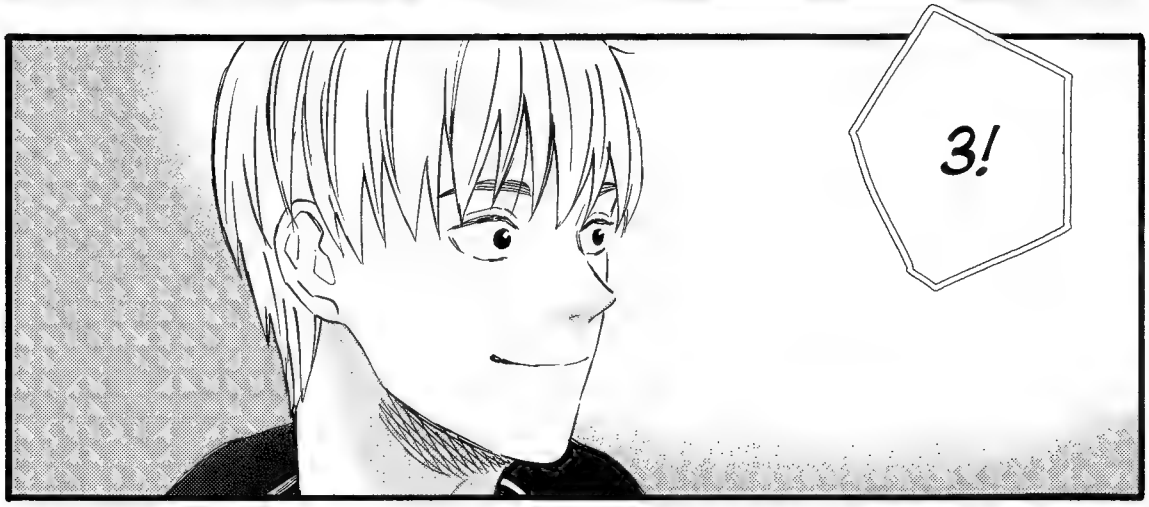

I WAS FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER.
THE SITUATION CERTAINLY ESCALATED QUICKLY...
THE THREAT OF DIVORCE?!
Murmur


AREN'T YOU TWO JUST SUFFERING FROM MENOPAUSE AND ANDROPAUSE?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW A KOTATSU CAN LEAD TO DIVORCE.

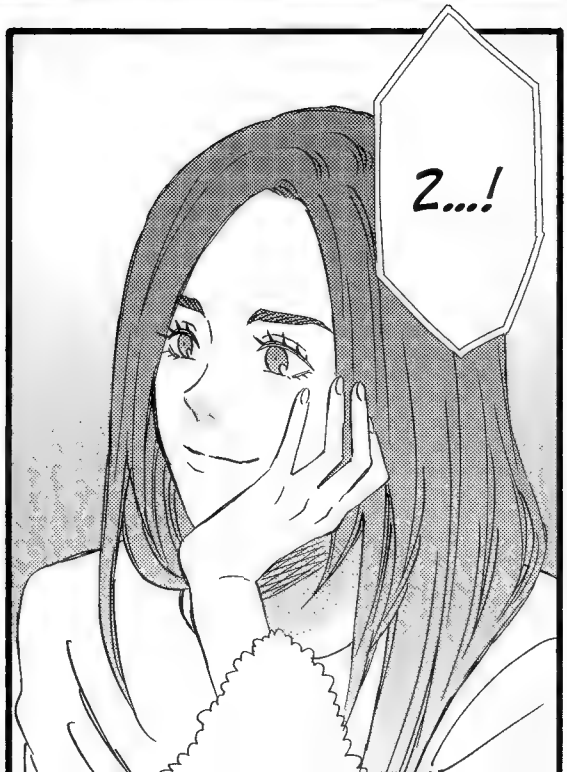

EVEN IF YOU ASK ME TO CHOOSE ONE OF YOU...

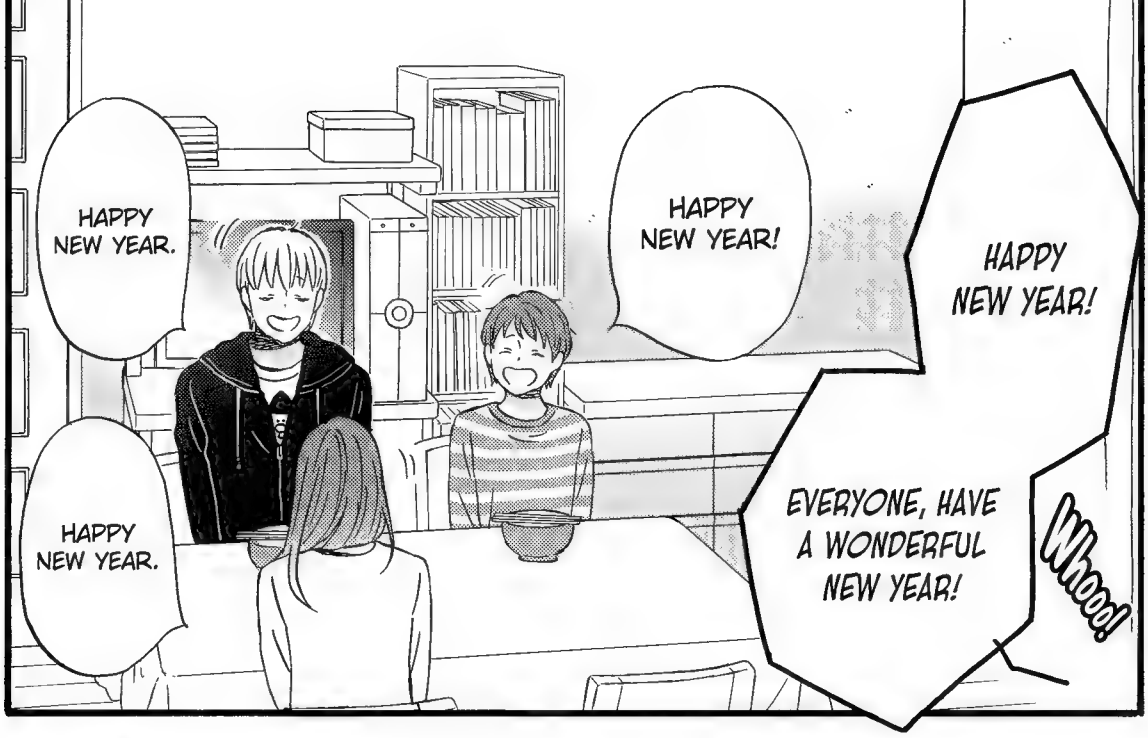

10...
9...
8...
7...
6...
5...
4...

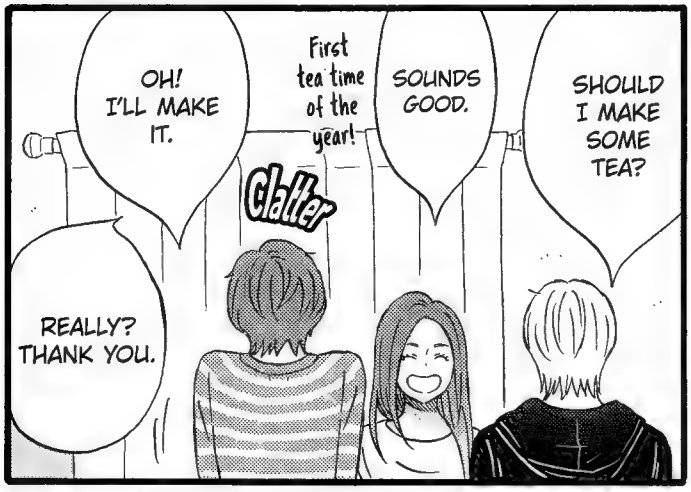
Whoo!
LIVE
ALL RIGHT... THERE'S ONLY ONE MINUTE LEFT FOR THE END OF THE YEAR!
OH! THE COUNTDOWN IS STARTING.

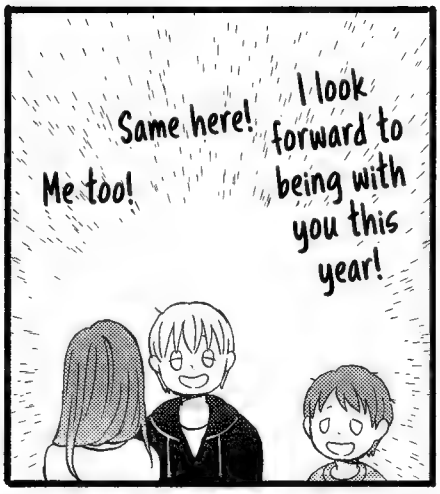

3!

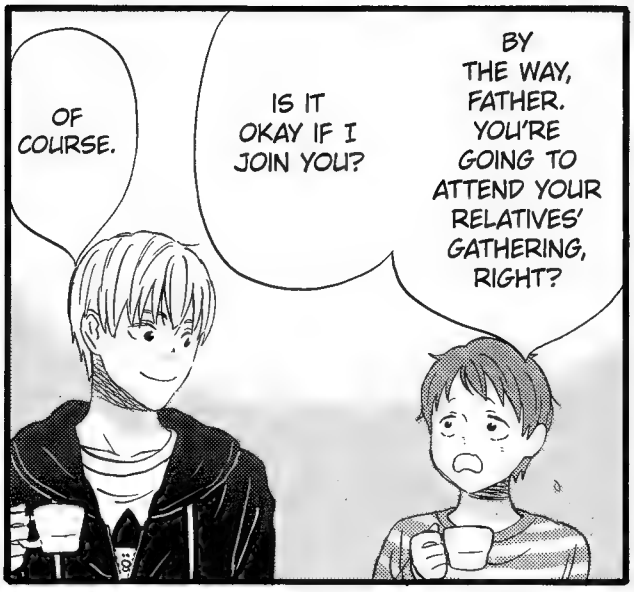
1...!

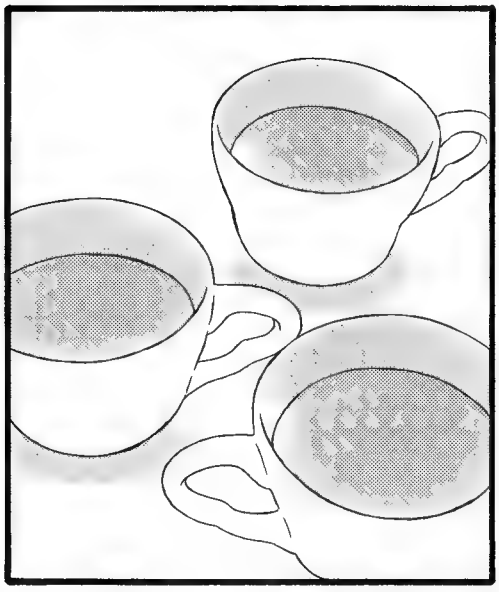

2...!


HAPPY NEW YEAR.
HAPPY NEW YEAR.
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
EVERYONE, HAVE A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!
Whoo!

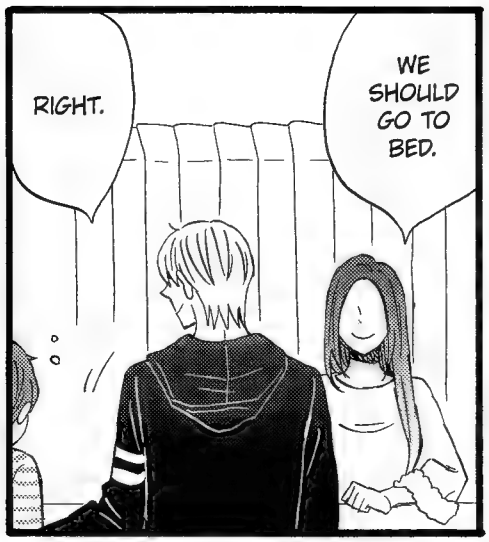

OH! I'LL MAKE IT.
First tea time of the year!
SOUNDS GOOD.
SHOULD I MAKE SOME TEA?
Clatter
REALLY? THANK YOU.


Same here!
I look forward to being with you this year!
Me too!

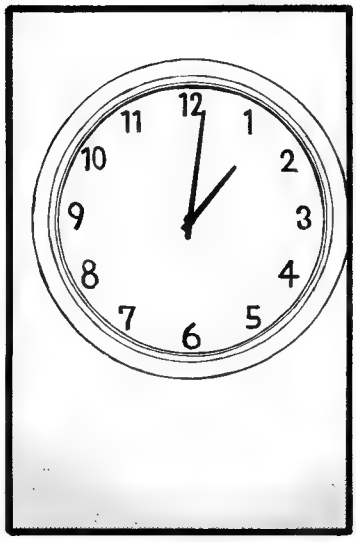

OF COURSE.
IS IT OKAY IF I JOIN YOU?
BY THE WAY, FATHER. YOU'RE GOING TO ATTEND YOUR RELATIVES' GATHERING, RIGHT?



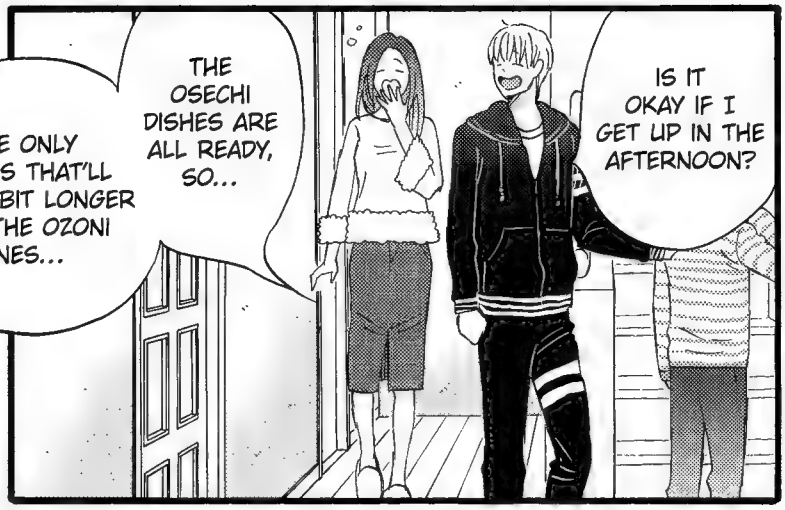
O-OKAY...
YOU CAN THINK OF IT AS A SHORT, RELAXING TRIP.
GRANTED, SOME OF MY FAMILY CAN BE A LITTLE ECCENTRIC, BUT THERE ARE A LOT OF GOOD PEOPLE TOO.
YOU'RE MY AND AI-SAN'S SON, AFTER ALL. YOU CAN PROUDLY CALL YOURSELF A KIRISHIMA.
WELL... SHE ALREADY DID ENOUGH DURING LAST YEAR'S GATHERING, SO I DON'T THINK ANYONE WILL MIND IF SHE DOESN'T SHOW HER FACE.
I just wanna go on a normal hot springs trip.
Whaaat...?
TAKE A LOOK AT AI-SAN. SHE'S NOT GOING THERE TO MEET ANYONE, BUT RATHER TO SOAK IN THE HOT SPRINGS.
By the way, let's also visit Grandma at the hospital tomorrow and wish her a happy new year.
Yeah.
Yay!
I WONDER WHAT MOTHER DID...
...GOT IT.
JUST GREET EVERYONE NORMALLY AND IT'LL BE ALRIGHT, JUN-KUN.

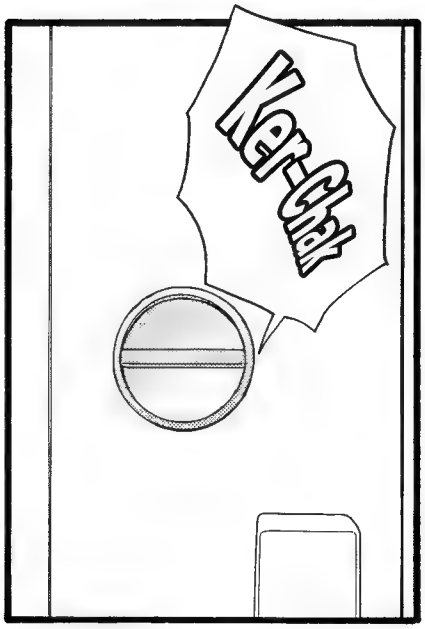

RIGHT.
WE SHOULD GO TO BED.

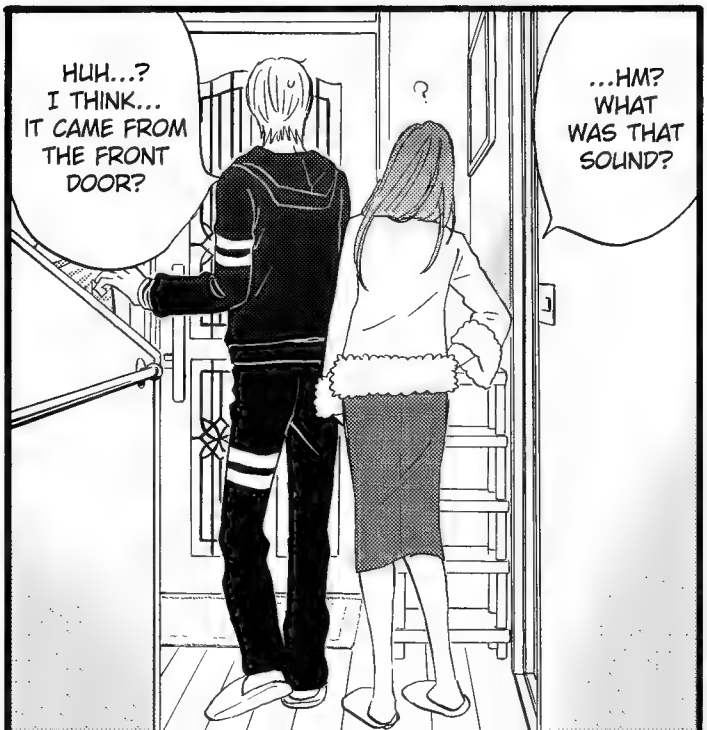
Nod...



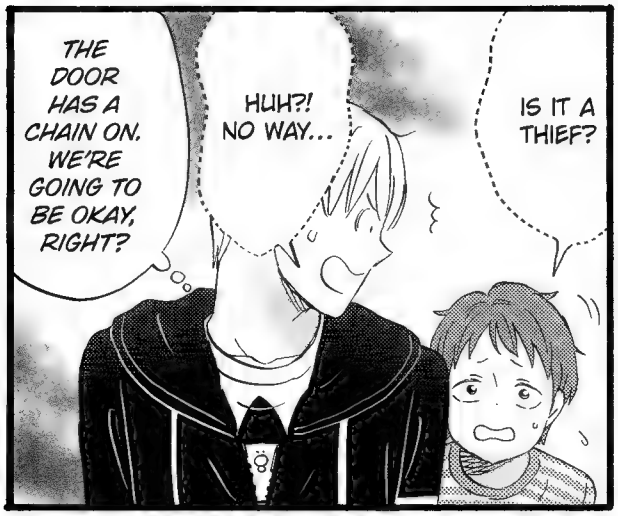
Ker-Chak
THE ONLY THINGS THAT'LL TAKE A BIT LONGER ARE THE OZONI ONES...


THE OSECHI DISHES ARE ALL READY, SO...
IS IT OKAY IF I GET UP IN THE AFTERNOON?

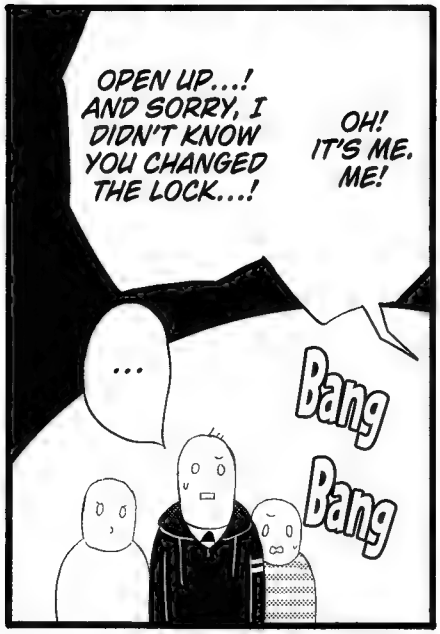

Ker-Chak


HUH...? I THINK... IT CAME FROM THE FRONT DOOR?
...HM? WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?

Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak
Ker-Chak

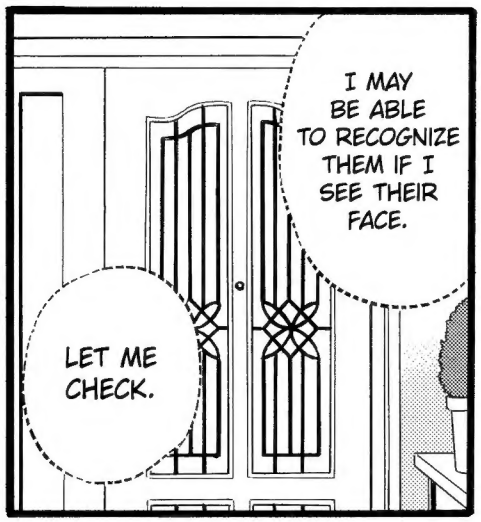

THE DOOR HAS A CHAIN ON. WE'RE GOING TO BE OKAY, RIGHT?
HUH?! NO WAY...
IS IT A THIEF?

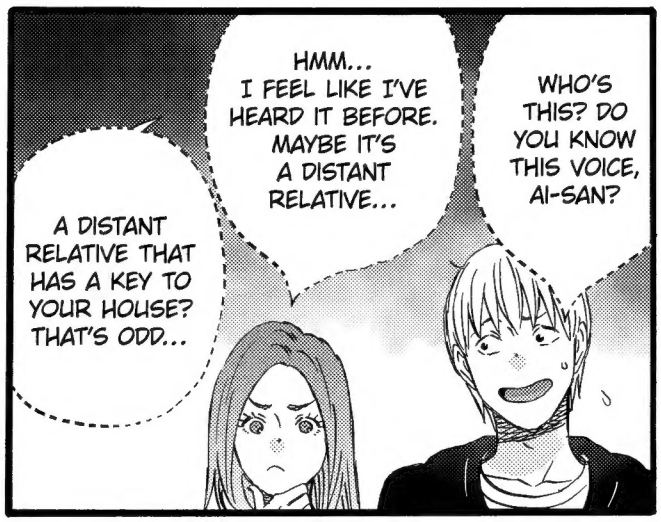
I MEAN... WHO THE HECK WAS THAT, SO EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR?
THEY GAVE UP?
...
Silence...

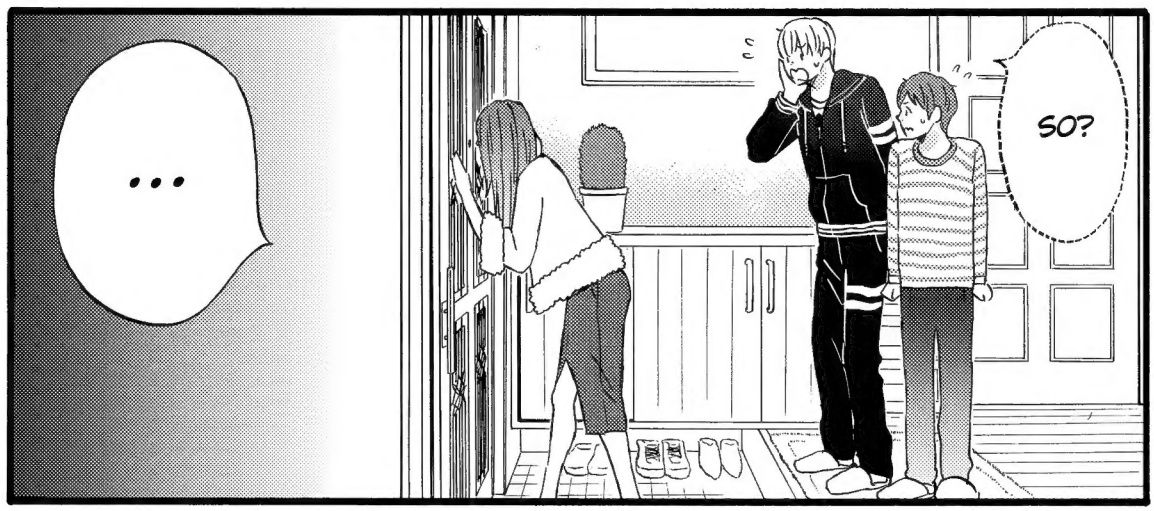

OPEN UP...! AND SORRY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU CHANGED THE LOCK...!
OH! IT'S ME. ME!
...
Bang
Bang

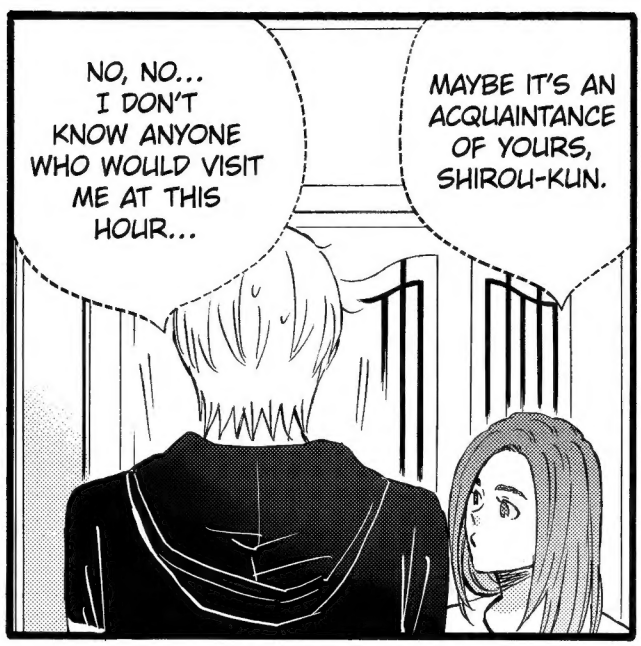
...UM! MAY I ASK WHO IS AT THE DOOR?

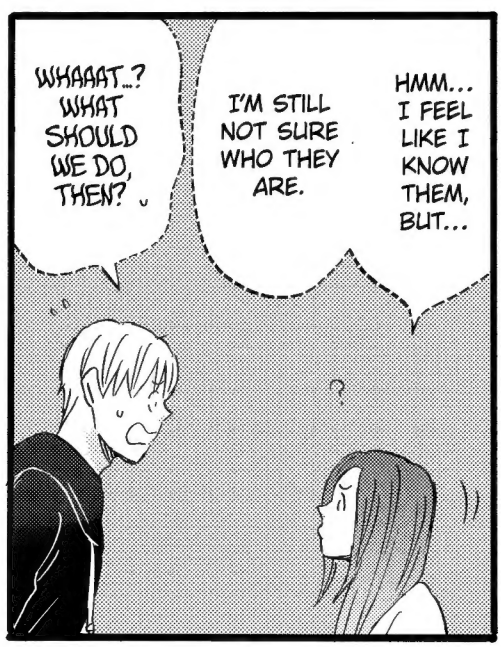
...

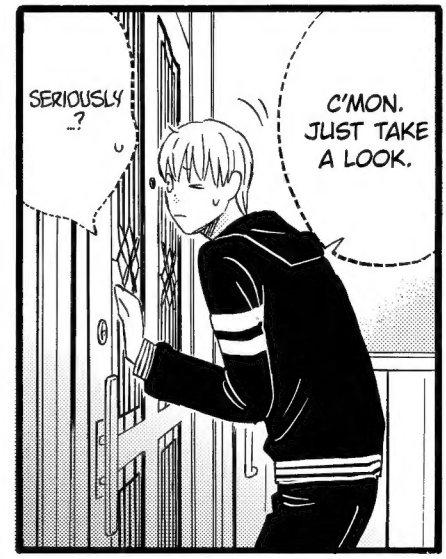

I MAY BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THEM IF I SEE THEIR FACE.
LET ME CHECK.

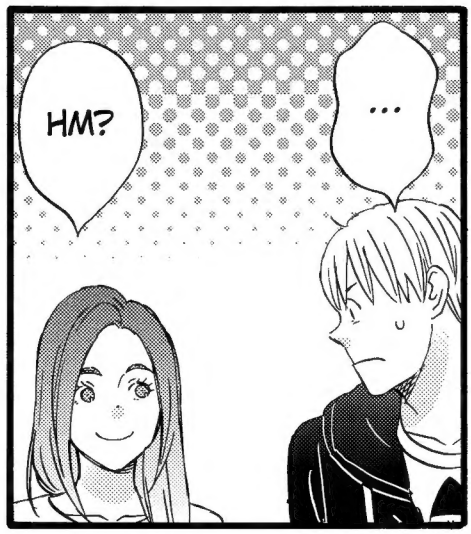

HMM... I FEEL LIKE I'VE HEARD IT BEFORE. MAYBE IT'S A DISTANT RELATIVE...
WHO'S THIS? DO YOU KNOW THIS VOICE, AI-SAN?
A DISTANT RELATIVE THAT HAS A KEY TO YOUR HOUSE? THAT'S ODD...

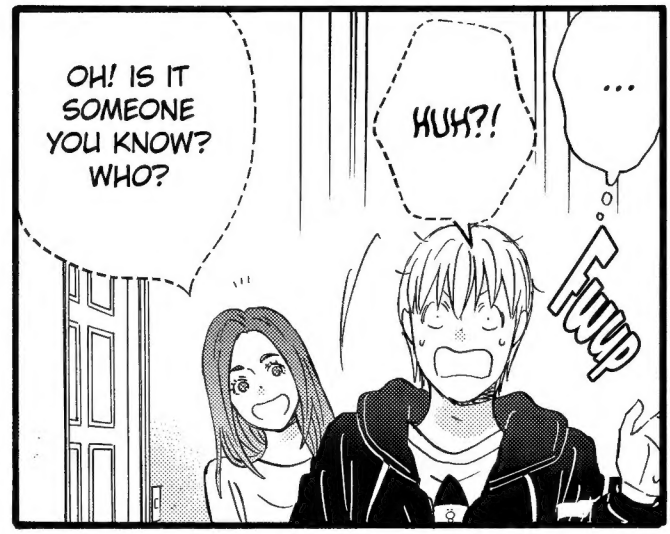

...
SO?

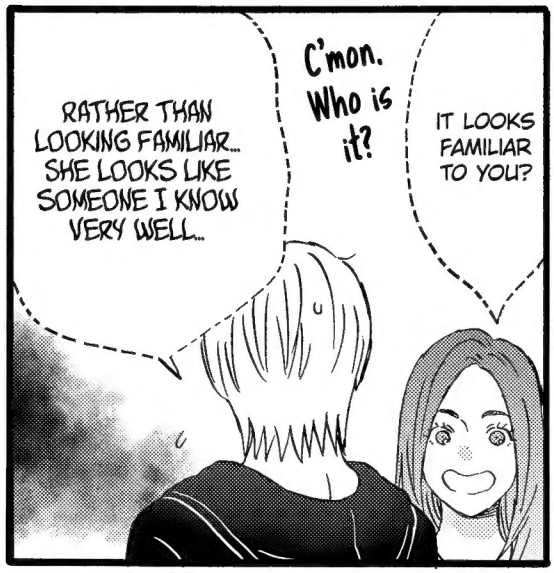

NO, NO... I DON'T KNOW ANYONE WHO WOULD VISIT ME AT THIS HOUR...
MAYBE IT'S AN ACQUAINTANCE OF YOURS, SHIROU-KUN.

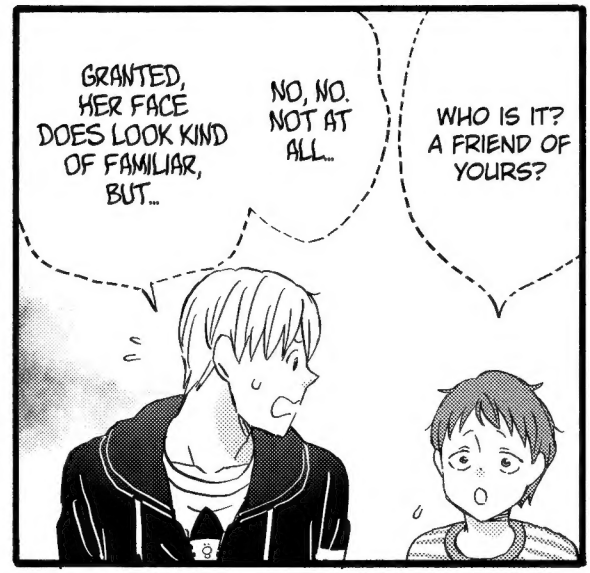

WHAAAT...? WHAT SHOULD WE DO, THEN?
I'M STILL NOT SURE WHO THEY ARE.
HMM... I FEEL LIKE I KNOW THEM, BUT...


SERIOUSLY ...?
C'MON. JUST TAKE A LOOK.

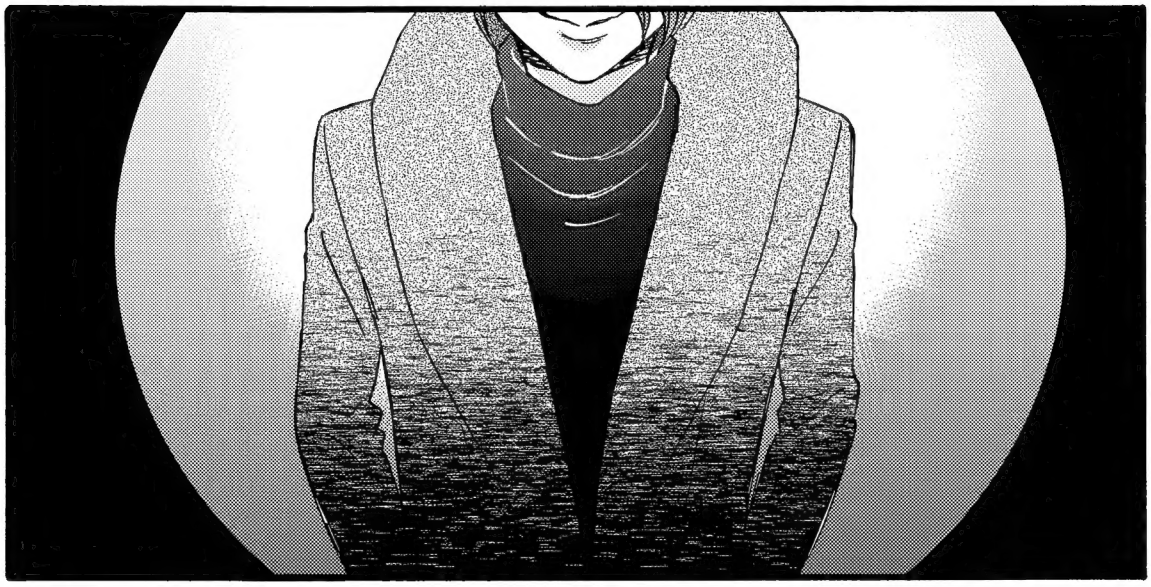

HM?
...

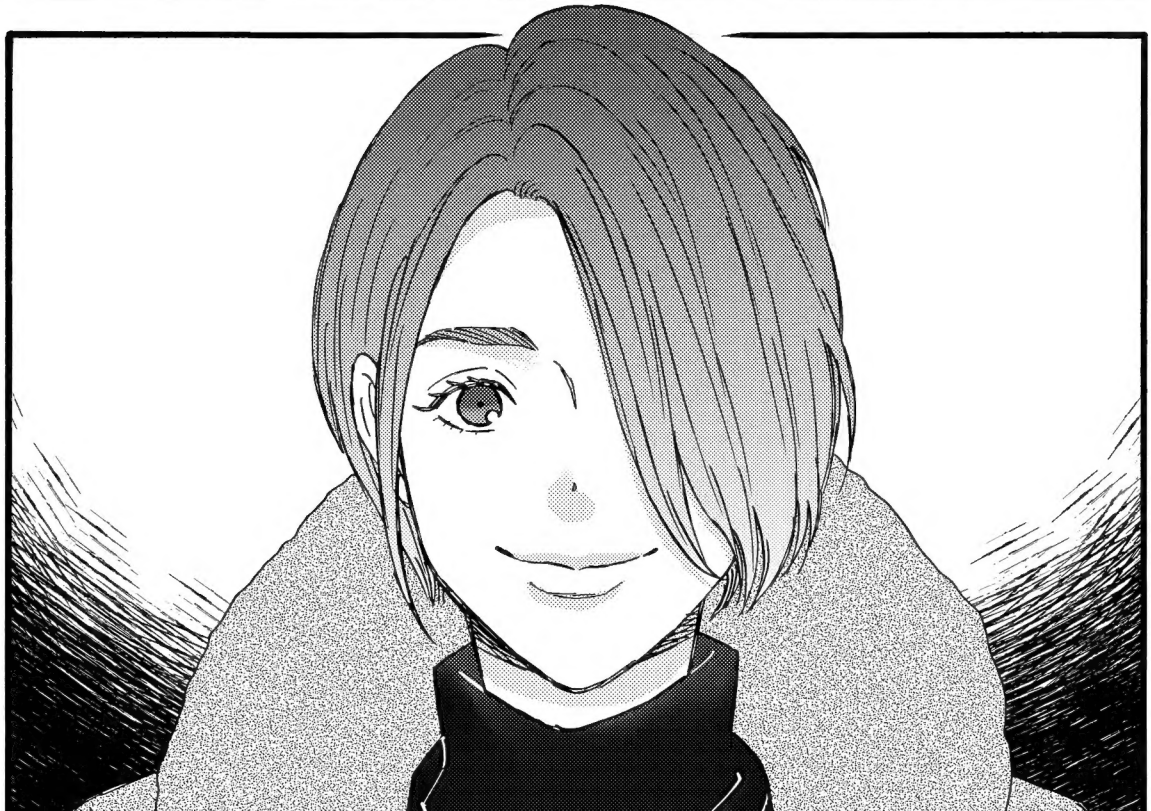

OH! IS IT SOMEONE YOU KNOW? WHO?
HUH?!
...
FUUP


RATHER THAN LOOKING FAMILIAR... SHE LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE I KNOW VERY WELL...
C'mon. Who is it?
IT LOOKS FAMILIAR TO YOU?


GRANTED, HER FACE DOES LOOK KIND OF FAMILIAR, BUT...
NO, NO. NOT AT ALL...
WHO IS IT? A FRIEND OF YOURS?

THOSE EYES.
THOSE EYEBROWS.
THAT PRESENCE...





...IF YOU ASK ME WHO THAT IS...
Bang Bang
HEY... HURRY UP AND OPEN THE DOOR...!

SO COLD!
WELL, I THINK THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE...
THAT SHE'S AI-SAN'S REAL MOTHER...?!